Meeting Minutes
http://set.lanl.gov/spac/
(TA-00, Canyon Complex, Room # 168)
Date: 3/28/02

Members Present:
Jerry Foropoulos, NMT-DO
Robert Gurule (Emeritus), CCN-12
Randy Kanzleiter, X-2
Michael Murillo (Emeritus), T-15
Bill Robertson, IM-2
Tracy Ruscetti, B-2
Lonnie Theye (Vice-Chair), NMT-DO
Sheila Wasfey, ESH-IM

Student Representatives Organization
Izzy Manzanares (Acting Chair of Student Association), BUS-5
Ryan Toya (Treasurer of SA), BUS-2
Claire Kerven (GRA), E-DO

LANL Representatives
Danny Valdez, DV
Margaret Marshall, OEO
Carole Rutten, STB-EPO
Kari Lier, STB-EPO
Mindy Mendez, STB-EPO
Allen Hartford, STB-DO
Helga Christopherson, HR-DO
Carol Beaulieu, HR-5
Barbara Pacheco, HR-5

The meeting was called to order by Lonnie Theye, at 8:04am

Minutes
Sheila W. read the meeting minutes. No changes were submitted. She will send the final version to Bill R. today. Dave H. will give Bill the last meeting minutes in a few weeks to post on the web.

More details of the last meeting's exception were heard. (same handout as last time)

Announcements:
Student employment – transcripts need to be in to HR-5 student programs for all students by April 1st. Returning students do not need to reapply.

Important Information handout (3/28/02a) regarding mentor and student liaison training, new student orientation (on events calendar and life at LANL on the web), all student meetings especially one with SPAC is crucial for SPAC members to attend.

After 1pm on orientation day, students need to contact their mentors.

Next SPAC meeting will be canceled so that SPAC members can go to mentor training.

Mentor training will have representatives from Ombuds, HR, and other organizations at booths for information to hand out to mentors.

Students will give feedback on these events so that we may compile lessons learned, shared ideas.

Tracy asked Carole if we have thought of going to HR training to have online mentor training as a refresher too. This could be part of our training plans. Bill R. said in T&D there is a person working on students; Dave Alexander (peer mentoring) Randy commented that people are complaining that there is already a lot of training and that you don't have to read the screens, you can just click next to get through them. Robert G. commented that people who show up to mentor training already know they need to be good mentors. Jerry F. suggested we get mentor training on LANL net. Tracy suggested online video that you have to watch. If this is made an online training that is tracked by EDS then what happens to people who don't complete it? Perhaps mentors can't hire students. Carol B. said perhaps we shouldn't have HR in a policing mode. Carole R. says the question we need to ask is "what does the mentor need to be doing to make it a quality experience for the student." Tracy head of new subcommittee for online training. Randy, Jerry, and Sheila have volunteered to help.

Student Issues:
No info on money for student picnic. Carole R. didn't get to speak with COC.

Student Issues Presentation by HR:
Proposing a new process to simplify student hiring/returning students because of the large volume of new students. HR only has 1 month to hire 400-500 new students per year. Returning students also go through a hiring process to bump them up to a new salary level.

Handout on new process 3/28/02b.

New student process
Encourage students to apply by April 1st.

Educational Opportunity posting site to go up on the web at an unknown date.

Hire on sessions will be at UNM-LA because they can handle the 70+ students hired-on on Mondays during May and early June.

Returning and Ongoing Student Changes:
Generate a PA to move them from casual status to next pay-level, limited-term status, and extend appt for 90 days. Last year HR generalists in the field did this. This didn't work very well. Year round students May – June are evaluated as part of this. January students are on a different schedule. They don't have to wait until May because they

are reviewed at their time of expiration. When mistakes are made they are paid retroactively.

Before May 13 after June 1st:
Work plan and transcripts should be submitted but PAs will not be held up if they are not in because sometimes transcripts are delayed or lost.

A follow-up over the summer will be done with the student regarding their academic progress. Audits are done by HR to examine transcripts and workplans.
Robert G. feels that making the mentor determine the student's academic standing would require the mentor to be trained and some students may be in the program that aren't eligible for the program. Carol B. agrees that this might water down the program.

Tracy asked how are the auditees were going to be selected. HR doesn't know for sure yet. Kurt and Carol B. will look at how many work plans and transcripts come in and then audit a portion of those who don't get it in. There is a concern that the people who don't get their workplans in but already have their student on board aren't going to care about getting their workplan in.

HR says there have been very few problems with students returning and not being eligible. The bulk of the problems are with students who are year round perhaps because they want to keep extending.

HR gets a list of students who are not within eligibility. Process takes a while to get to where an exception is written or the student is terminated. Students can actually go through a summer before anything is done about this.

Carole R. handed out the policy for UGS employment (ref # 3/28/02c). There are concerns that students will come to LANL with a budget based on their summer salary upgrade. If the student was not eligible then the student would lose out on the increase thus creating ill-will between the students and LANL. We anticipate a larger number of exceptions if we are not catching ineligibility real-time. HR does need a better system but not thinking this through thoroughly will damage LANL's ability to transition students into our workforce. Making this change in one month and 18 days is too quick. We expect the 1800 LANL mentors will be angry if they have to determine their students' eligibility because they have better things to do with their time. Someone suggested that it may be better to have the PA generated and still requires the transcript and work plan.

A discussion ensued among SPAC members that resulted in the following memo to Allen Hartford and Helga Christopherson.

SPAC Recommendations
for an HR Proposal

There was a lively discussion among SPAC members concerning an HR proposal to implement some changes in the operation of student programs. The rationale that was discussed and any consensus resulting from this discussion are as follows:

SPAC feels that responsibility for collecting and evaluating a student's transcript should not lie with the mentor. The mentor's responsibility is to cultivate a student's knowledge, skills, and abilities and interest them in one day joining the Laboratory's permanent staff. Mentors volunteer their services, and burdening them with responsibility for something they are not adequately equipped to do may discourage them from serving as mentors. If they do accept this responsibility, it may result in a "watering down" of student programs because mentors are not adequately trained to evaluate a student's eligibility.

SPAC recommends that students take responsibility for verifying that they meet the eligibility requirements by obtaining and submitting their transcripts at the intervals set by HR. It was also suggested that HR hire a part time high school or UGS student prior to the influx of summer students to assist in processing PAs for student employment.

SPAC members were in agreement that automatic raises for students are unacceptable. To give a raise to students based upon their anticipated class status would create a great amount of ill will if it was later discovered that the student had not completed all of the course work required for that pay raise. To take away a pay raise after it is granted and expect students to adjust their life style to a lower salary will create poor public relations for the Laboratory. Such a practice would hinder our ability to reach the Laboratory's goal of recruiting students after graduation. Ineligible students must be identified in real-time or the number of exceptions will likely increase.

SPAC recommends a short-term solution of adapting an automated PA system using Fall transcripts as a salary guide. When HR receives transcripts with Spring grades, a new PA will be created to implement a pay raise if justified. A long-term solution would be to set an early date (i.e. Nov. 1, Feb. 1, or both) for students who work during the summer to provide their transcripts to HR. This would provide adequate time to implement a pay raise for eligible summer students. Students working during the Fall or Spring semester (or quarter) could be handled early because the numbers are small. HR could either issue a new PA to implement a pay raise (not retroactive) when the transcripts are received, or continue the student's salary at the level for which they were eligible as a result of their previous semester's transcript.

SPAC is also uncomfortable with the fact that HR has no clearly defined procedure for evaluating a student's eligibility to participate in student programs after a PA has been automatically created to continue the student in the program. A permanent policy should be determined next fall because the month and a half left before summer students arrive is insufficient time to thoroughly examine the ramifications of this decision. SPAC would like to be fully involved with HR in the planning and decision-making that must go into the development of this policy.

Respectfully Submitted

Lonnie Theye, Acting Chair on behalf of the SPAC Committee
April 3, 2002

Lonnie Theye
Ph: 665-7030

lat@lanl.gov

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Wasfey, Historian Team

Current and Outstanding Action Items

From 1/17/02 Meeting:

Need to select a vice-chair of sub-committees – Dave H.

From 1/31/02 Meeting:

Find out what GPR stands for versus the traditional Grade Point Average (GPA). - ?

Post archived meeting minutes on the SPAC web page - Sheila W.

From 2/14/02 Meeting:
A new chair of the Rapid Entry Subcommittee needs to be selected – Dave H.

Select a backup meeting minute taker – Dave H.

Address issues students who stepped down expressed - SPAC

From 2/21/02 Meeting:
Ideas for Recruiting Students:
Possibly compile information on students interested in helping with SPAC or the SA through incoming student surveys during student orientation. A box could be placed on the surveys to indicate a desire to participate. – suggested by Carole R.

Possibly recruit additional members during an upcoming student breakfast. An activity could be mentioned that would likely attract more students. – suggested by Kurt S.

Possibly create an e-newsletter for students as a way to increase participation.- suggested by Bill R.

Possibly send out an official call for student members to all divisions. The divisions themselves could then nominate students. – suggested by Dave H.

Present a daft of the letter calling for nominations at the next meeting and advertise on the web page. Send out the letter calling for nominations. – Lonnie T and Bill R.

Fill sub-committee vacancies. – Dave H.

LIMS meeting. – Kurt S.

From 3/14/02 Meeting:
Send out URL for full UC Boulder Study. - Carole R.

Do we have info on students working here as UGS, living here with parents, etc and then staying here for long term retention? Can we send out an email to lanl-all and ask if they were ever a UGS here? - Carole R. will check with Kurt about this.

Send a one page letter to Michael Carlson in order to promote the call for student nominations in the Daily Newsbulletin. – Dave H.

Send out the call for student nominations on March 20th – Lonnie T.

Report on meeting with COC. – Carole R.

Setup a booth at the student picnic. – Dave H.

From 3/28/02 Meeting:

Subcommittee formed to look at online mentoring training. –headed by Tracy R. Members: Randy, Jerry, and Sheila.